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SUBJECT: TURKEY: A/S FRIED'S OCTOBER 21 MEETING WITH MFA

REF: A. YEREVAN 844

[B](#). ANKARA 1827

[C](#). ANKARA 1818

[D](#). ANKARA 1628

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. In a three-hour meeting October 21 with EUR A/S Fried, Turkish MFA Under Secretary Apakan said that Turkey:

- hopes to wrap up an agreement with Armenia before the end of the year;
- wants both the U.S. and EU to join the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform in its second stage;
- needs additional support from the U.S. vis a vis the PKK in northern Iraq;
- supports rebuilding Georgia and has counseled Saakashvili to avoid confrontation with Russia;
- continues to support Kosovo's independence, and
- has not tied the hands of Turkish Cypriot leader Talat in UN talks.

Fried briefed Apakan on his visits to Yerevan and Tbilisi, noting that President Sargsian had welcomed his message that the Turks are serious about rapprochement, and that he had been blunt with President Saakashvili that he must avoid a cycle of confrontation that only serves Russian interests.
END SUMMARY.

Armenia/Nagorno Karabakh

[1](#)2. (S) A/S Fried told U/S Apakan that, during his October 17 visit to Yerevan, he emphasized to Armenian President Sargsian that normalization of relations with Turkey is Armenia's chance "to get out of its fortress." Turkey is serious about a deal with Armenia and is not just playing a game to forestall Armenian genocide resolution passage in Congress. The Turks, he told Sargsian, have proven their seriousness by the flexibility they have demonstrated on points of Armenian concern (ref A). Fried said Sargsian saw this as positive, saying that a three month window exists for an agreement with Turkey.

[1](#)3. (C) Fried said he emphasized to Sargsian that the Nagorno-Karabakh (N-K) conflict cannot continue to drift. The U.S. intends to stay in the Minsk Group and will seek to continue to work with Russia to solve N-K. At the same time, the U.S. does not intend to give the GOAM a pass on democracy: he told Sargsian to find a way to resolve the

detention of 75 persons detained since March. Sargsian appeared less anxious to move on these issues than on foreign policy, and the opposition believes Sargsian wants to use Turkey and N-K negotiations to attract Western support without making domestic concessions. In the long-run, nevertheless, it is good for Armenian democracy for Armenia to normalize relations with its neighbors and escape its "siege mentality."

14. (S) Apakan said Ankara will retain its forward-looking approach toward Armenia. Turkey's goal is to finalize an agreement soon, certainly by the end of the year. While Turkey is determined to succeed with Armenia, there has to be balance and an "honorable deal" for both sides to show to their publics. Apakan noted that the Armenians are unfailingly "nice people" but have a collective psychology of nervousness due to the pressure of history and geography. You cannot treat the Armenians as a country of equal confidence and weight as Turkey, Fried replied. Sargsian is different; he appears to want to transform his country's position. The U.S. will do what it can to support this and the work Armenia and Turkey are engaged in, Fried promised.

Georgia

15. (C) Apakan said Turkey would send a state minister to Brussels October 22 for the Georgia donors' conference (ref B) to show its solidarity and seriousness on Georgia. Apakan said FM Babacan would like the U.S. and EU to be included in the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) "at

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the proper time, in the second phase." Apakan allowed defensively that the hasty introduction of the CSCP, days after the Georgia conflict erupted, did not give Ankara room to invite the U.S., but it had known all along that Turkey needs U.S. political and economic engagement, not only in the Caucasus but also in the Balkans and Central Asia. Turkish engagement will facilitate a more active U.S. role in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans, not impede it.

16. (C) Fried responded that Georgian President Saakashvili expressed concern about any structure that included Georgia and Russia without the United States. Turkey should continue to engage with him to explain its goals and objectives. Fried's own message to Saakashvili was blunt: the U.S. will not recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but the cycle of confrontation serves Russian interests, so Georgia must focus on strengthening the economy and stability of unoccupied Georgia, and avoid incidents that could spark conflict. Georgians have rallied around Saakashvili, but they do not want another war. They know how close they came to losing their country.

17. (C) Fried said he had spent a day along the line with South Ossetia and had heard firsthand accounts about South Ossetian gangs continuing to raid Georgian villages even after the Russian withdrawal. The U.S. is considering military support for Georgia, but only for defense. Turkey, Fried concluded, has legitimate interests in the region and a right to hear what the U.S. is considering. The West needs to support Saakashvili while leaning on him to be restrained, sober and serious.

18. (C) Apakan underscored the cultural and historical ties Turkey has to Georgia through its ethnic Georgian and Abkhaz communities. Despite pressure from Turkish Abkhazians, Ankara showed its support for Saakashvili by not allowing Abkhaz "President" Bagapsh to visit Turkey. Utilizing the ties it has to the Abkhaz defacto leadership through Abkhaz and Circassian Turks, Ankara has conveyed the message to the Abkhaz that they "should steer clear of the Russians." Saakashvili, he said, does not know this. Likewise, in the early days of the crisis, Turkey used its soft power as a neighbor of Russia, telling Moscow that Russian occupation of

Georgia was unacceptable and needed to end. Apakan asked the U.S. to tell Saakashvili to stay in contact with Turkey and take account of its views.

Iraq

¶9. (C) Apakan said Turkey and the U.S. share nearly identical views on Iraq, particularly regarding territorial integrity and political unity. Turkey needs U.S. support on Kirkuk and in developing Iraqi energy resources. Regarding the PKK, Apakan said Turkey needs support beyond what the U.S. is already doing to "isolate and remove" the PKK from Iraq. New cooperation with PM Maliki and KRG President Barzani presents a new opportunity. Fried commented that Turkey's strategy of military steps against the PKK coupled with outreach to Turkish Kurds is a very sound plan.

¶10. (S) Apakan asked for news about the U.S.-Iraq SOFA. The Ambassador noted that the debate over the SOFA in Iraq is likely to be long, and urged that Ankara do what it can to influence Iraqis, particularly Sunni Arabs with which Turkey has good relations, to support it. If the SOFA is not approved, the U.S. does not want to go back to the UNSC for another mandate because this could put critical Iraq issues at the mercy of other international political problems. There is no language that the USG would accept in a new UNSCR that is not already in this SOFA, he said.

Kosovo/Bosnia

¶11. (C) Apakan said Turkey supports Kosovo's independence and will continue to offer social, economic and political support. He noted that the GOT is working with Ankara's prestigious Middle East Technical University to open a campus in Kosovo. Turkey did not vote on the recent UNGA resolution on referring Kosovo's independence to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) because it did not believe it should

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obstruct Serbia's legal right to bring the case to the court. Nevertheless, Turkey made a statement that the recognition by 51 countries is giving Kosovo's independence legal status. The USG, Fried said, also views Kosovo independence as a fact, but wants Kosovo to feel confident and will help Kosovo in the ICJ case. Turkey's support is helpful. The U.S. also wants Serbia to know that it has a future as a European country. The political trajectory in Belgrade is positive but the Serbs cannot be "European by day and threatening by night." Fried expressed greater concern about Bosnia, where the leaders are behaving as if it is 1996. Apakan agreed. He said PM Erdogan and President Gul conveyed the same message to the Bosnian Presidential Council earlier this year: "This is 2008; you need to act in a way that supports Bosnia."

Macedonia

¶12. (C) Fried said that although the USG does not agree with the Greek position on Macedonia's name, a delay in solving the issue could cause instability in Macedonia. The Albanians in Macedonia would not be happy if lack of a name deal keeps Macedonia out of NATO. Because Turkey cannot be accused of being too pro-Greek, it should urge the Macedonians to make a deal. Apakan replied that the Greeks themselves have made the same suggestion. He noted that Turkey and Macedonia agreed to postpone signing of their bilateral strategic framework declaration until after the end of the General Assembly to give name negotiations more time to work.

Cyprus

¶13. (C) Apakan said he was disappointed to learn from the UN SYG Ban that ROC President Christofias has been complaining about Turkey and Turkish Cypriot leader Talat. Turkey was one thing, he said, but Talat is a "positive man, and a man for peace." Several people have hinted that Turkey should allow Talat more negotiating room, but this is a misconception: Ankara is not dealing with Talat or seeking to manage the Cyprus talks on a day-to-day basis. Instead the Turkish MFA sends its deputy director general for Cyprus and an MFA attorney to Cyprus roughly every two weeks to stay informed and monitor progress. Turkey has not tied Talat's hands.

¶14. (C) Deputy U/S Berk noted that the renewed UN process lacks discipline because it has allowed the Greek Cypriots to reopen parameters that have been agreed in previous UN discussions: political equality, equal status of two constituent states, and power sharing arrangements. Turkey's assumption had been that the new talks would start with the Annan Plan as a basis and that each side would raise its objections. Ankara remains serious about the process but "our optimism is fading." Fried agreed that the initial optimism had "run into the sand," but argued that a solution could not be imposed. A Cyprus deal inevitably would not satisfy everyone, but the current situation is not a good one. There is no alternative to a settlement.

¶15. (C) Apakan outlined what he described as the "essence" of a settlement: bizonality, bicommunality, co-founding states, security, property, territorial adjustment, an EU dimension and Greece-Turkey balance. Apakan said that an agreement would entail significant territorial gains for the Greek Cypriots, and that up to one-third of Turkish Cypriots would have to be relocated. Turkey would remove most of its troops (down to 650). In return, the Turkish Cypriots want to become a constituent state with proper arrangements for power sharing and political equality. To keep the regional balance, the Treaties of Alliance and Guarantee must remain intact. Without these, he said, the GOT will not be able to sell an agreement to the Turkish parliament or public. Apakan underscored that Turkish Cypriots also ask, justifiably, what their status will be if the negotiations fail.

¶16. (C) Apakan also said that the EU must adopt any Cyprus settlement as a source of primary law so that Turkey and Turkish Cypriots will have "legal certainty" that the EU will

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not later change the parameters of the settlement. Ceilings on resettlement of Greek Cypriots in Turkish Cypriot areas and drawdown of Turkish troops should be tied to Turkey's EU accession. These are not preconditions, Apakan said, but would facilitate smooth implementation of the agreement. They are not Turkey's points, he added; they are points previously espoused by the UN.

Aegean

¶17. (C) Berk said Turkey appreciated the support of the U.S. in May for canceling the NATO exercise involving the Greek island of Agios Efstratios. However, Ankara is hearing again that Greece is reinitiating this exercise. NATO should not get involved in bilateral disputes among members. Fried took note of the Turkish concern. Separately, he said that he had welcomed the cancellation by Turkey and Cyprus of military exercises near Cyprus. Berk agreed, but said the Turkish and Greek exercises Barbaros/Toxotis exercises remain undecided. Turkey's Barbaros is usually first. If Greece agrees to cancel Toxotis, then Ankara would not proceed with Barbaros. Berk noted that Ankara has not/not yet asked Greece to cancel Toxotis, but would soon.

Afghanistan/Pakistan

¶18. (C) Apakan said Turkey plans to continue its trilateral outreach with Afghanistan and Pakistan. FM Babacan will travel to Afghanistan soon. Turkey believes that -- from a strategic point of view -- the Hazara Turks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen in Afghanistan form a very strong northern block of opposition against the Taliban that should be utilized. Fried suggested coordination with Germany given its role in the North.

¶19. (U) PARTICIPANTS:

Turkey

Under Secretary Ertugrul Apakan
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¶20. (U) A/S Fried has cleared this cable.

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WILSON